Kansas Historical Notes

A nine-member administrative council for the Republic County Historical Society was elected by a mail vote in June, 1947. The members are: Mrs. H. J. Adams, Mrs. R. Camedon and Mrs. Gilbert H. Faulkner of Belleville, Mrs. E. G. Blackburn and Mrs. O. E. McMullen of Courtland, Frank Z. Stover of Republic, Mrs. E. E. Conzelman of Scandia, M. M. Fate of Talmo, and A. Q. Miller of Salina.

The women’s division of the Topeka Chamber of Commerce voted September 18, 1947, to restore John Brown’s cabin, located at 2303 Pennsylvania, in Highland Park, Topeka. Work was started early in December and it is planned to make the cabin look as it did when Brown hid runaway slaves in its tunnel. The tunnel will be re-opened, and the house will contain authentic furniture of the period.

The Shawnee Mission Indian Historical Society met September 22, 1947, for luncheon and the election of officers at the home of Mrs. John Blake. The following were elected: Mrs. C. F. Terry, president; Mrs. Frank D. Belinder and Mrs. John Barkley, vice-presidents; Mrs. James G. Bell, recording secretary; Mrs. Arthur Wolf, corresponding secretary; Mrs. J. S. Caldwell, treasurer; Miss Lucile Larsen, historian; Mrs. Tom Davis, curator, and Mrs. M. Y. Griffin, member-in-waiting. These officers were installed at the October meeting which was held at the home of Mrs. James Bell. The society has 112 members; eleven having been added during the year. Mrs. K. S. Browne was the retiring president.

New officers of the Ness County Historical Society elected at a meeting in Ness City on September 25, 1947, are: O. L. Lennen, president; Jennie Eibert, vice-president; Nelle C. Nye, treasurer, and Audra M. Hays, secretary.

The Riley County Historical Association held its annual meeting in Manhattan October 2, 1947, and elected the following officers: Clyde K. Rodkey, president; Mrs. Florence F. Harrop, vice-president; Mrs. Medora Hays Flick, secretary; Joe D. Haines, treasurer, and F. I. Burt, curator. Directors elected for a three-year term are: R. R. Bennett, Mrs. O. O. Parker and Dr. J. W. Evans. The association expects to have permanent quarters for a museum when the new Peace Memorial Auditorium is built. In cooperation with the
chamber of commerce of Manhattan, the association is also making plans to preserve and advertise local historic sites. Mr. Rodkey has appointed a committee to determine what places should be marked and to decide on a method of marking them. The conclusions of the committee will be reported to the chamber of commerce by February, 1948.

At the annual business meeting of the Hodgeman County Historical Society in Jetmore October 3, 1947, the following officers were elected: L. W. Hubbell, president; Mrs. O. W. Lynam, vice-president; E. W. Harlan, secretary, and Mrs. O. L. Teed, treasurer. Mrs. Margaret Raser was appointed chairman of the program committee as well as historian for the society. F. E. Ochs, Miss Elfrieda Kenyon and Mrs. O. W. Lynam were elected directors for three-year terms. Mr. Hubbell outlined a plan for preparing a more complete history of early events in the county.

Through the efforts of the Fort Scott Business and Professional Women’s Club, the old government building on the Plaza is again open to the public as a historical museum. The building, which was formerly officers’ headquarters for the army post in pre-Civil War days and later the Free-State hotel, was temporarily taken over by the women’s club to revive interest in the city’s early history. The story of the building, erected in the 1840’s, was reviewed by Ralph Richards in an article in the Fort Scott Tribune, October 9, 1947.

Dr. O. P. Dellinger of Pittsburg was re-elected president of the Crawford County Historical Society at the annual meeting held in Pittsburg October 16, 1947. Other officers elected included: Mrs. F. A. Gerken of Girard, vice-president; Mrs. C. M. Cooper of Pittsburg, recording secretary; Mrs. C. D. Gregg of McCune, corresponding secretary, and Mrs. George Elliott of Pittsburg, treasurer. Directors named for three-year terms were: C. D. Gregg of McCune, Charles Grandle of Cherokee and Dr. Ralph Smith of Pittsburg. The principal speaker was R. Purgatorio of Frontenac, one-time Italian consul. Mr. Purgatorio spoke on Italian immigration to this country, particularly in the late 1880’s and the early 1890’s. Mrs. EllaWerne of Pittsburg told of her family’s early years in Crawford county and Frank Mason of McCune and Dr. H. M. Grandle also recalled the pioneer days of Crawford county.

Jerome C. Berryman was elected president of the Clark County Historical Society at its annual meeting in Ashland, October 25,
1947. Other officers elected were: Mrs. Charles McCasland, vice-president; Mrs. Ethel Gardiner Wilson and John E. Stephens, honorary vice-presidents; Mrs. J. C. Harper, recording secretary; Mrs. Sidney Dorsey, assistant recording secretary; Miss Rhea Gross, corresponding secretary; Wm. T. Moore, treasurer; M. G. Stevenson, auditor; Mrs. R. V. Shrewder, historian, and Mrs. Barth Gabbert, curator. After a program of talks and music, Lon Ford told of some of the guns in his collection. The collection was purchased with money collected by a committee headed by Clair C. McFarland and was presented to the society for its museum. Thirteen life members were added making a total of 121 life members and six annual members. Mrs. Ethel Wilson, the retiring president, presided at the meeting.

The Kiowa County Historical Society held its annual old settlers' reunion October 28, 1947, at the community building in Greensburg. Two hundred and fifty persons attended. Sixteen couples sat at the “Golden Wedding” table for those married fifty years or over. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Huls of Greensburg who have been married sixty-four years. Seventy-four persons qualified for seats at the “pioneer” table which was reserved for those seventy years or older. The program consisted of music and readings and a tribute to the pioneers given by the Rev. Elmer E. Brooks of Greensburg. Newly-elected officers are: Mrs. Bruno Meyer, Havidland, president; Henry Schwarm, Greensburg, and W. A. Sluder, Mullinville, vice-presidents; Mrs. Louie Keller, Greensburg, treasurer, and Mrs. Benj. O. Weaver, Mullinville, secretary.

The third annual meeting of the Protection Historical Society was held on November 4, 1947, in the basement of the Methodist church. Mrs. T. W. (Nell) Riner was reelected president and Claude Rowland vice-president. A program of impromptu reminiscences followed the business meeting.

The Douglas County Historical Society was reorganized at a meeting on November 20, 1947, into the Lawrence Historical Society. Sen. R. C. Rankin presided. The new society has as its purpose the preservation of the history of Lawrence and the surrounding area. The first undertaking will be the erection of a new building in which to house articles and records of historical value. A second project will be plans for the observance of Lawrence's 100th anniversary in 1954. Kirke Mechem, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, discussed the importance of historical societies.
in local communities. He spoke of the historical collections of the Kansas society and pointed out that it is one of the largest in the nation. Officers elected by the new Lawrence society are as follows: R. B. Stevens, president; Dolph Simons, vice-president; Walter Varnum, treasurer, and Mrs. Dwight Prentice, secretary. Other persons elected to the board of directors besides the above officers are: R. C. Rankin, O. P. Barber, Corlett Cotton, Tommy Constant, Justin Hill, Walter Keeler, Miss Ida Lyons, Mrs. E. M. Owens, Olin K. Petefish, M. N. Penny and Art Weaver. With a few alterations the constitution of the Douglas County Historical Society was adopted by the new society. The society received from C. E. Collins of Kansas City, Mo., a foot-long oak “key” which was used years ago to lock the main shaft on the Dutch windmill which stood on Mount Oread for many years before it was destroyed by fire about 1910. The historical collection of the society is growing and it is hoped that the new city building will provide a room large enough to make a temporary display of the many interesting articles connected with the early days of Lawrence.

Members and friends of the American Pioneer Trails Association met at the Memorial building in Topeka, December 1, 1947, to hear a discussion by the president, Howard R. Driggs of New York City, of plans for the coming year. The marking of Western cattle trails will have first place on the agenda, and a brochure and map will be prepared for distribution to members. Mr. Driggs spoke of the association’s desire to see a national park or monument established in Kansas and recommended Alcove Springs, near Independence crossing in Marshall county, as a suitable location. Dr. George W. Davis of Ottawa is the association’s regional director for Kansas.

The Shawnee County Historical Society held its second annual dinner meeting December 5, 1947, at the First Methodist Church in Topeka. Nyle H. Miller of the Kansas State Historical Society was the principal speaker. Mr. Miller discussed the origin and early happenings of Topeka and Shawnee county, and read parts of letters written by Cyrus K. Holliday, one of the town founders. Mayor Frank Warren spoke on behalf of the city, and Mark Lumb spoke as a representative of the Topeka schools and told of the use by the schools of the society’s quarterly historical Bulletin. Robert Stone, president of the society, recalled some of the historic places in the county that deserve more attention and better marking. A number of old pictures, maps, charts and newspapers were shown at the
meeting. Also microfilm and photostatic copies of the original records and proceedings of the Topeka association were shown. The society’s board of trustees met on December 22 and re-elected the following officers: Robert Stone, president; Mrs. Erwin (Dorothy Crane) Keller, vice-president; George A. Root, secretary; Paul Adams, assistant secretary; Paul B. Sweet, treasurer, and Cecil Howes, editor of the Bulletin. Stone, Root, Adams, Sweet, Howes, Paul A. Lovewell, Milton Tabor, J. Glenn Logan and Arthur J. Carruth, Jr., are the trustees. The September-December number of the society’s Bulletin included the following articles: The first installment of “Founders of Topeka,” which presents a sketch of the life of Dr. Franklin Loomis Crane, by Mrs. Erwin Keller, a great-granddaughter; “What About the Name, Topeka?” by Cecil Howes; the second installment of the reprint of William W. Cone’s “Shawnee County Townships”; “Early Topeka Days,” the reminiscences of Mrs. Harry Seery; “The Smith, A Mighty Man Was He,” by Paul Lovewell, and a continuation of George Root’s “Chronology of Shawnee County.”

Historic Midwest Houses, by John Drury, a November, 1947, publication of the University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, contains pictures and articles descriptive of historic and interesting homes in twelve Midwestern states. Kansas houses included in the volume are: the John Brown cabin at Osawatomie, Carry Nation’s house at Medicine Lodge, Ed Howe’s home at Atchison, the William Allen White house at Emporia, and the Eisenhower dwelling at Abilene, boyhood home of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Mr. Drury, a Chicago newspaperman, made his selections after a ten-thousand-mile tour of the Midwest. More than half of the eighty-seven houses listed are museums. Two of the Kansas homes mentioned, the John Brown cabin and the Eisenhower home, are open to the public.

75 Years in Great Bend is the title of a recently issued story of the city. It is a 48-page pamphlet composed of pictures contrasting the early-day city with that of today. There are brief explanations and bits of history connected with the buildings and people shown.

An attractive illustrated folder featuring Emporia, “capital of the bluestem-pasture region,” was a recent publication of the Emporia Chamber of Commerce.